

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

President :
B. T. RANADIVE

General Secretary :
P. RAMAMURTI

172, Lenin Sarani,
Calcutta-13.

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P R E S S C O M M U N I Q U E .

ON STOPPAGE OF PUBLICATION OF DAILY NEWSPAPERS
IN CALCUTTA.

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, has issued the following statement to the Press :

The refusal of the newspaper magnates of Calcutta to accede to the demands of the news vendors and distributors has deprived lakhs of citizens of their morning papers. The denial of the urgent and daily news of life must be deemed to be an anti-social act. In the background of the war clouds hanging over the country when the role of newspaper media assumes vital importance, the deadlock created by the press barons must be deemed is an ~~anti~~ anti-national act fully deserving chastisement at the hands of the authorities.

The CITU has already protested against the new tax on newspapers and considered it as an anti-people measure penalising the ordinary reader. The Government has been extremely ill-advised in imposing it in the present situation facing the country.

But this does not in the least justify the conduct of the press magnates who have imposed a price rise of as much as 40 per cent on the readers. The excuse showed that the cost of production has risen is a pure eye-wash. The papers depend for the profits on the large number of advertisement that they get and mint money out of them. They are really trying to blackmail the people and society. The CITU warns against this game. In the first place, the press barons want to exploit the situation to declare lockout and then carry on retrenchment of their union leaders and activists. They are also continuing and conspiring to blackmail the Government to withdraw the Press Bill that is on the agenda of the Parliament. They are also afraid that during the process of collection of the new excise duty on their claims of large circulation and ill-gotten gains from blackmarketting in newsprint will be exposed.

The CITU calls on all Trade Unions and the entire people to rally against this conspiracy of the newspaper owners. It asks the Govt. to take immediate steps against them, and prohibit exhorbitant increase in price of the papers. Considering the fact that they are making huge profit, they should be asked to bear the burden of the new tax of 2 paise.

The interest of news vendors also demand that the price of newspaper should not be raised. If the announced rise is permitted circulation of daily papers is bound to go down and their incomes are bound to be lesser. At the same time their just demand that they must get the commission as fixed percentage of the price of newspaper must be accepted. The Government also must ponder whether with the war clouds hanging over the country it is conducive to national interests to allow the circulation of papers to go down.

The Editor,

for Secretary.

- for favour of publication.